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## TOPICS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY READING AND DISCUSSION IN UNITED STATES HISTORY

THE following list of topics was prepared with the object of introducing pupils to the dynamics of history ; or to speak more accurately, it grew from day to day by the noting down of such questions of a general nature as arose in the consideration of American history with reference to cause and effect. For convenience, they are loosely grouped under ten heads. Of course in a list of this kind, considerable repetition is not only unavoidable but even desirable.

The conditions assumed are : first, that the pupils belong to an advanced grade and bring to the work a fair knowledge of common historical facts ; secondly, that they have access to a few books in which to read up on the questions started in class.

The method which has proved most successful is briefly as follows :

1. To require an accurate recitation of the facts, not slighting even such much berated things as battles and dates.
2. To demand an explanation of the facts. Here, of course, the pupils are immediately at sea and numerous absurd theories are started, but by dint of plying them with questions, calling attention to resemblances and differences in the history of other times and countries, they can usually be made to think the matter out for themselves.
3. After this has been done with some measure of success, the question is tersely formulated and given to the class or to certain pupils for further investigation in reference books : a connected report being called for at some future session, usually the next recitation.
4. Finally, the whole matter is briefly reviewed and summed up in an informal lecture. The pupils are thereafter held responsible for it on all occasions, including examinations.

### I. THE NATIVE RACES AND CIVILIZATION

1. Conditions necessary for passage without foreign instructions (1) from hunting and fishing to pastoral existence ; (2) from hunting and fishing to agricultural ; (3) from agricultural to manufacturing and commercial.

2. Conditions of military efficiency; how affected by each of the transitions above named? Reasons for usual weakness of peoples in first stages of agriculture. Illustrate from ancient American and general history, *e. g.*, Apaches and Pueblo Indian, Germans, and Romans, etc. Part which the Six Nations played in American history. Economic reasons for their military power and superiority to all other natives. Parallel from early German history (Cæsar, *de bello Gallico*, IV, 1-3).

3. Political organization corresponding to (1) hunting and fishing life, (2) pastoral, (3) agricultural, (4) manufacturing and commercial. Reasons for it in each case.

4. Conditions which produce feudalism: (1) The existence of an extensive state, usually the result of conquest; (2) the existence of a natural, as opposed to a money, economy—this being found as a rule in the purely agricultural stage.

5. Family—clan—tribe: their development, and relation to state in different stages thereof. Origin of township and county.

6. The two elements in civilization: (1) knowledge of the useful arts; (2) ripening of intellect and especially of self-control. Fundamental character of the latter, and length of time demanded for its acquisition. The evil results of forced and premature civilization, *e. g.*, Celts, Slavs, American Indians, etc. Connection of the predominant Indian blood in Spanish America with the chronic state of revolution there existing.

7. Conditions productive of despotic government: (1) control of common resources; (2) union of spiritual and temporal powers. Cf. the Natchez, Aztecs, Peruvians, and the great despotisms of the old world.

8. Right of conquest, illustrated in the seizure of America by whites, as based on superior civilization. Sense in which might is right, because in the long run only right is might. Meaning of "Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht." Sense in which the mediæval conception of battle as a "judgment of God" may be justified.

## II. DISCOVERY AND COLONIZATION

9. Reasons why the Norse discovery of America was of so little importance and the Spanish of so much. Fundamental changes in industry and society which had taken place in Europe in the meantime.

10. Difference in motives and consequent difference in mode of

settlement of Spanish, English, and French. Explanation of present contrast between Spanish, English, and French America as regards purity of blood and character of civilization.

11. Reasons for limits of Spanish conquests: (1) in nature of country, (2) in condition of inhabitants and their resulting military efficiency, Apaches and Araucanians.

12. Economic reasons for decline of Spanish power in Europe and America.

13. Fundamental reasons, economic and political, for defeat of French in America. The French-Indian massacres as indicating an approximation to the intellectual level of barbarians as regards the decisive factors in warfare.

14. Commercial and military importance of rivers before the invention of railroads.

### III. CHARACTER OF THE ENGLISH COLONIES

15. Causes which produced democracy in New England and aristocracy in Virginia and South Carolina: (1) Climate and soil, causing a difference in crops; (2) waterways; (3) homogeneity of population in North; heterogeneity, in South.

16. Winthrop and Hooker as representatives of the two antagonistic tendencies of Calvinism

17. Religious toleration: its history as a compromise forced by necessity on reluctant peoples and parties. Reasons for this is the religious character of the state in previous ages.

18. The New England "Common" and the ancient Folkland.

19. Industrial cause of the social and political contrast between North and South Carolina, and between the East and the West in South Carolina. Political consequence in each case, traced through the Civil War. Connection with the present division with the democratic party in South Carolina.

20. Causes of prevalence of county system in the South and township system in New England.

### IV. THE REVOLUTION

21. Pre-revolutionary conception in Europe of a colony, its nature and use. Apparent economic foundation of this conception in law of decreasing returns.

22. Reasons why Pitt's friendship for the colonies brought with it the King's enmity.

23. The relative proportion of whigs and tories in the several colonies and causes of the difference. Consider (1) race, (2) industries, (3) history, *e. g.*, Andros and Berkeley.

24. The two British plans of campaign in the revolution and military reasons for the failure of each. How would the existence of railroads have altered the situation?

#### V. THE CONSTITUTION

25. Defects of the Articles of Confederation and provisions in the Federal Constitution which can be traced to experience of these defects.

26. Conditions which had fostered particularism in the Colonies. Connection of this with the party of strict construction.

27. The revolutionary action of the Constitutional Convention in providing that the assent of the nine states should be sufficient for the adoption of the new constitution.

28. Distinctive characteristics of the Federal state, as contrasted on the one hand with the centralized simple state, on the other hand with the league of states.

29. Steam and electricity as agents in political consolidation.

30. In what sense may the character of the government, central, and local, be reckoned as a factor in industrial progress?

31. What novel factors are there in the modern experiment of self-government which were not present in the ancient? If this experiment fails, to what forces or tendencies will its failure be due? Conditions necessary for the maintenance of a republic.

#### VI. THE SLAVE POWER

32. The natural and economic conditions necessary for the success of slavery, as regards, (1) nature of the soil; (2) size of estates; (3) (crops for which there is a demand; (4) markets for sale of produce and purchase of supplies and manufactured articles; (5) abundance of fresh land. Explanation of the land hunger of the South which dominated American politics down to the Civil War.

33. The three districts in which the slave system was most fully developed, with reasons. The effect in those districts as regards: (1)

the organization of society; (2) the political influence of those districts as compared with other parts of the South.

34. Reasons for the transference of political leadership in the South from the Atlantic coast to the Gulf States.

35. The comparative growth of North and South in wealth and population between 1790 and 1860. Reasons for the disparity. Explanation of the fact that before the war the planters were rich but the South was poor; since the war the planters are often poor, but the South has increased rapidly in wealth.

36. The two ways in which individual wealth may be acquired, and the effect of each on society as a whole: (1) by earning it; (2) by securing it from others without rendering any return, or any adequate return. Analysis of the slave system, showing its identity with systematic brigandage.

37. Reasons why the doctrine of state sovereignty was abandoned at the North but cherished at the South. Its practical effects in causing general obedience on the part of the citizens, when the states actually seceded, to their ordinances of secession.

38. The necessary effect of the destruction of the slave system: (1) on the organization of society; (2) on the distribution of political power among the several classes of whites in the South. Connection of the present populist party in the South with the abolition of slavery. What effect did the reconstruction policy of Congress have on this political readjustment?

39. Reasons why the democratic party has abandoned strict construction, advocating measures implying an enormous extension of governmental power, while the republican party is shifting in the direction of strict construction,

#### VII. THE SPOILS SYSTEM

40. Similarity of the spoils system to feudalism (1) in the use of public funds (income from lands or office) to secure and reward personal services; (2) in the building up of a *de facto* government, based on private relations among individuals, behind the *de jure* government; (3) in the choice of men for office without regard to their qualifications to discharge its duties; (4) in the consequent multiplication of offices, through the appointment of deputies to perform the duties which the chief is incapable of performing; and (5) in the creation of sinecures, still further to augment the patronage at the disposal of the chief.

41. Psychological reasons for the support which the spoils system finds in the mass of the people. Reasons why the confusion of public good with private interests is easier in a democracy than elsewhere.

#### VIII. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

42. Origin and meaning of Monroe Doctrine. In view of the constitutional reforms in Europe since 1823, and the political anarchy in Spanish America, does insistence on it now favor or retard the civilization of those regions? If the latter, may any considerations of economic and political self-interest be adduced in extenuation or justification of it?

43. Has war ever advanced civilization? If so, could anything else have taken its place? Can arbitration ever be applied where the existence of a nation or a peculiar civilization is at stake?

44. Detailed analysis showing in what sense and to what extent commercial rivalry is the substance without the name of war.

45. In case of commerce between two nations, one chiefly manufacturing and commercial, the other agricultural, what does the former gain (and lose) by buying provisions and raw materials abroad? What does the other gain by buying manufactured articles abroad, supposing it to be unfitted for making them at home? Does it gain, or lose, or neither, if it buys instead of manufacturing them, notwithstanding it is fitted to make them? Explanation of fact that England today supports a population many times greater than in any previous century. Connection with law of decreasing returns.

#### IX. PANICS

46. An account of the four great panics in America, finding by analysis: (1) the antecedent conditions common to all; (2) the manner in which these conditions resulted from waste of labor and capital; (3) the reasons why the process of recovery is of necessity slow.

#### X. INDUSTRIAL CHANGES

47. Prevailing occupations in 1789; changes since then. Connection of these changes with (1) machinery; (2) the growth of cities; (3) the growth of population in general throughout the western world. Explanation of growth of New York and Chicago.

48. Economic reasons for the new grouping of parties in the decade 1820-1830.

49. Nature of a monopoly. By which of the two methods mentioned above (No. 36) does it acquire wealth: (1) if the price is advanced to the maximum revenue limit; and (2) if the price is reduced as rapidly as the economics in production allow?

50. Comparison between the slave-labor system and the trust system as respects (1) the production of wealth; (2) the distribution of wealth among the several classes; (3) the existence of a strong middle class.

51. Connection of railroad and telegraph with growth of monopolies and trusts. Is it propable that legislation will avail, in the long run, to check this tendency to concentration of management?

52. If the trust system is carried through, destroying the middle classes, what political effects may be expected to follow?

53. Are there any indications of a tendency in it to raise up a new middle class to replace the classes it destroys?

54. In case the trust system proves to be the logical and unavoidable form for the management of modern industry, what means, if any, can be devised to insure that society as a whole shall share in the benefits of the economies of production which it renders possible?

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